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ABSTRACT

A multi-perspective qualitative study was conducted during the spring 1996 semester to investigate the impact of a mentoring initiative on the performance of ten adjunct instructors, new to the faculty of Indian River Community College (Florida). The study found that all participants derived a significant value from the mentoring initiative, with those who had some previous teaching experience in another setting and/or a previous mentoring relationship accessing the mentor more frequently and deriving the greatest benefit. The initiation of mentoring with an adjunct instructor should follow his or her mastery of a foundation of pedagogical knowledge. Mentoring should not be used to supplant an initial, more structured role to be played by a department chair or other discipline leader. The interpersonal skills of the mentor played a more significant role in the success of the mentoring relationship than did his demographic characteristics. The report recommends a five-component comprehensive plan for the development of the college's adjunct faculty: (1) structured orientation of new adjunct instructors; (2) development and subsequent delivery of a teaching methods course mandated for all new adjunct faculty; (3) ongoing, individually-initiated mentoring between new adjunct and veteran instructors; (4) development of a structured set of opportunities for social interaction between full-time and adjunct faculty; and (5) creation and promotion of a materials resource center. (VWC)

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A Proven Program for Developing Adjunct Community College Faculty

Presentation to:

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National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development
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While American community colleges have historically prided themselves as strong teaching institutions, they are currently reacting to a wide range of political, economic and social pressures by relying more heavily than ever before on adjunct faculty. While typically well-grounded in their disciplines, adjunct instructors are often underprepared to meet the needs of community college students, who are increasingly unable to perform academically and are challenged by dysfunctional personal lives and an economy in transition. Visionary leaders in the community college movement realize the coalescence of these factors require them to take proactive measures to ensure that their adjunct faculty members are adequately equipped to provide the high quality instruction demanded by this complex challenge.

Building upon the findings of a semester-long pilot study with twelve adjunct instructors, the researcher conducted a multi-perspective qualitative study during the Spring 1996 semester, which investigated the impact of a mentoring initiative on the performance of ten adjunct instructors, new to the faculty of Indian River Community College. The participants represented a wide range of discipline areas, motivations to teach and demographic characteristics. The mentoring focused on general pedagogical skills and classroom management practices, and was not discipline specific.

The study found that all participants derived a significant value from the mentoring initiative, with those who had some previous teaching experience in another setting and/or a previous mentoring relationship accessing the mentor more frequently and deriving the

greatest benefit. This fact seems to indicate that the initiation of mentoring with an adjunct instructor should follow his or her mastery of a foundation of pedagogical knowledge, and that mentoring should not be used to supplant an initial, more structured role to be played by a department chair or other discipline leader. The findings also indicate that the interpersonal skills of the mentor played a more significant role in the success of the mentoring relationship than did his demographic characteristics.

The study recommended a five-component comprehensive plan for the development of the college's adjunct faculty, designed to meet the major needs of adjunct instructors. The plan was instituted within the Business and Information Technology Division during the Fall 1996 semester and has been regularly updated since that time. Over three hundred adjunct instructors, as well as approximately fifty full-time instructors, have participated in one or more of the program's components.

The first component of the plan is a structured orientation of each new adjunct instructor, immediately prior to their initial teaching assignment, conducted by the department appropriate chairperson. While usually one-on-one, orientation meetings with several new adjunct instructors have proven especially effective. The orientation employs a structured checklist and addresses such general human resources issues as certification and pay procedures, instructional concerns such as syllabus construction and evaluation procedures and instructional resources supporting instruction, as well as such department specific issues as classroom opening and closing procedures and student retention activities.

The plan's second component was the development and subsequent delivery of a teaching methods course, "Instructor Effectiveness Training", mandated for all

new adjunct faculty prior to, or concurrent with, their initial teaching assignment. Each of the course's four sessions focuses on one key aspect of delivering a course -- pre-planning the course, conducting an effective first class meeting, improving teaching and learning practices and evaluating the success of both students and the instructor. The course is delivered in four-hour Saturday morning sessions, beginning two weeks prior to the opening of the fall and spring terms and overlapping their beginnings. Thus, participants are provided not only essential information for successfully beginning their courses but a forum for processing reflections of their initial teaching experiences.

As tested by the study, the plan also includes ongoing, individually-initiated mentoring between new adjunct instructors and full-time, or veteran adjunct, instructors. Mutually rewarding mentoring is fully explained during the structured orientation, encouraged to those participating in each section of the "Instructor Effectiveness Training" course, and was the topic of the first "Brown Bag Luncheon" (described below). Mentoring is also promoted by department chairs in their regular meetings with individual adjunct instructors. In several cases, mentoring has embraced a "team teaching" assignment between the teacher of a previous section of a course and an adjunct instructor teaching it for the first time.

Reacting to the frequently-cited phenomenon that adjuncts feel isolated from their colleges, a structured set of opportunities for social interaction between full-time and adjunct faculty has been developed. Monthly "Brown Bag Luncheons" are the primary vehicle, providing adjuncts and full-time faculty with an informal means of interaction. The hour-long luncheons have from the outset also incorporated a half-hour developmental activity. Besides the kickoff session on mentoring, the series has included programs on cooperative

learning, utilizing "icebreakers", syllabus development, managing the mileposts of the course, start, test construction and analysis and special challenges of "Generation X" students. Each academic year's series closed in April with a sharing time on memorable teaching experiences. A second vehicle for providing linkage to the College and encouraging social interaction -- an end-of-the-academic year informal Friday afternoon reception for all college employees that targets adjunct instructors -- was instituted by IRCC's chapter of the Florida Association of Community Colleges, and has been replicated each year since.

The final component of the plan was the creation and promotion of a materials resource center, comprised of a small library of both purchased and donated books made available on a "check-out" basis. Also available are copies of an assortment of faculty-produced papers on teaching methods and related issues. The center has encouraged adjunct instructors to assume increased "ownership" of their own continuous development. Plans are underway to create a web presence for this component to make it more convenient for adjunct instructors to access.

Completion of the structured orientation and "Instructor Effectiveness Training" course have been required of all new adjuncts teaching within the division. Eight sections of the IET course have been delivered by the researcher, serving nearly two hundred participants -- primarily new adjunct instructors, but new full-time instructors and a few veteran instructors as well. Recent participants represent increasingly diverse discipline areas from throughout the entire institution. The plan's other components have been made available not only to new adjunct instructors, but to veteran full- and part-time instructors as well.

Evaluations conducted of each component of the plan indicate extremely positive

acceptance by adjunct participants, as well as department chairpersons. Each component reinforces the role of others, e.g. the "Instructor Effectiveness Training" course initiated relationships later nurtured during "Brown Bag Luncheons". Mentoring relationships evolved throughout and across all of the activities. Besides building the knowledge base of the division's adjunct faculty, this extremely low-cost plan has engendered collegiality and provided decision-makers with richer information for evaluating adjuncts and making more effective teaching assignments. An early participant in the program, who obtained a full-time faculty position and has begun his doctoral work, plans to conduct a longitudinal study of program participants for his dissertation study.

The adjunct faculty represents a valuable resource to the effective community college, increasing its ability to deliver highly specialized courses, enriching the context of the curriculum and lowering overall delivery costs. As any well managed resource does, the adjunct faculty requires ongoing development for its value to appreciate, aiding the community college in effectively addressing the many challenges facing it now and in the future. This low-cost approach has proven highly effective at Indian River Community College.

Instructor Effectiveness Training
MNA 1330 AA
Spring 2000

Class: Saturday mornings, 8:15 - 12 noon
B building, room 215, IRCC's Fort Pierce Campus
One credit course, satisfies portion of recertification requirement

Textbook: *The Adjunct Professor's Guide to Success*, available at the IRCC Bookstore, or via *BarnesandNoble.com* or *Amazon.com*. A 3 ring notebook is recommended for organizing the ample handout materials that will be provided.

Instructor: Dr. Richard Lyons, Associate Professor in IRCC's Business Management Department, received his B.S. in Business Administration and M.A. in Marketing Education from Western Kentucky University, and his Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Central Florida. He began teaching college courses as an adjunct instructor at Western Kentucky, and has also worked as a supermarket manager and in sales. He has been at IRCC for 14 years, as adjunct and full-time instructor, department chair and dean.

Office: The instructor will be available immediately following the end of each class meeting. In addition, he may be reached at school, telephone 462-4715 or e-mail *rlyons@ircc.cc.fl.us*, or at home, 778-1787 or e-mail *AdjunctScs@aol.com*.

Teaching Methods: A wide variety of instructional methods will be used to provide students with meaningful learning experiences, and to provide a model for students to adapt for their classrooms. These include role play, group problem-solving, self-analysis instruments and Socratic questioning, as well as more traditional methods.

Objectives: Upon completion of this course, each participant will be able to:

1. Explain the function of the department chair;
2. Develop an effective course syllabus;
3. Describe the factors that impact the success of today's community college students;
4. Conduct an effective first class meeting;
5. Explain prudent classroom organizational skills;
6. Demonstrate a variety of instructional methodologies;
7. Plan, conduct and follow up field trips and guest presentations;
8. Identify the factors impacting professionalism in the classroom;
9. Demonstrate transactional analysis techniques;
10. Compare and contrast test formats;
11. Analyze test results, take corrective actions;
12. Conduct formal and informal student evaluations;
13. Explain the rationale behind frequently misunderstood college policies and procedures.

Attendance Policy: Although the instructor is providing opportunities for each student's achievement of course objectives, students should recognize the value which their experiences and insights offer others as well. Therefore, it is critical that you attend and participate actively in each session. An "S" will not be awarded to any student missing more than one class.

Grading Criteria: Attendance, participation
Journal (standard provided), minimum of 6 entries

Schedule

January 8 **Planning the Course** ***Chapters 4 & 5***
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Instructors
Utilizing your most valuable resource: the department chair
Resources for planning: textbook, ancillaries, media, course outlines
Today's community college student
Developing an effective syllabus -- your contract with students
Preparing for the first class meeting

January 15 **Getting off to a Great Start** ***Chapters 6 & 7***
Introducing yourself effectively to the class
Using "icebreakers" and "student profiles" effectively
Establishing an appropriate atmosphere, professionalism
Effective communications techniques, "Transactional Analysis"
Managing class time effectively
Dealing with common teaching challenges

January 22 **Improving Teaching & Learning** ***Chapters 8 & 9***
Using field trips, guest speakers and other activities effectively
Develop the exam in advance, study guides
Using "advance organizers"
Asking questions, lecturing effectively
Cooperative and experiential learning
Using audio-visual materials and equipment effectively

January 29 **Evaluating Success** ***Chapters 10, 11 & 13***
*Journals due
Comparing and contrasting test formats
Exam construction, de-bugging
Scoring exams, using Scantron system
Analyzing test results
Peer evaluation of your teaching
Students assessments of teaching: informal and formal
Questions, discussion

Mentoring Agreement (sample)

Realizing that an ongoing mentoring relationship between veteran and part-time instructors can provide many benefits to each party, as well as to Indian River Communication College overall, Chris Smith, full-time Assistant Professor, and Tony Barkwell, adjunct instructor enter into the following agreement.

During the Fall 2000 semester, Dr. Smith agrees to:

1. Meet with Mr. Barkwell each Friday afternoon for approximately one hour, to debrief progress in Mr. Barkwell's course, as well as provide additional information on teaching methodologies, classroom management techniques, and policies and procedures of the College;
2. Speak with Mr. Barkwell on an as needed basis by telephone, at 462-9999, between 1 and 4 p.m. any weekday afternoon;
3. Allow Mr. Barkwell, upon a day's notification, to visit regular class meetings of any evening course being taught by Dr. Smith, for purposes of observation of teaching methods and classroom management;
4. Unless approved by Mr. Barkwell in advance, treat all communications with Mr. Barkwell as confidential.

Mr. Barkwell agrees to:

1. Accept Dr. Smith's coaching as non-directive, realizing that academic freedom and other professional practices require his acceptance of ultimate responsibility for all decisions discussed with Dr. Smith;
2. Serve as a guest speaker, on a mutually-agreeable topic, for a segment of one of Dr. Smith's class meetings, and debrief that activity immediately afterwards;
3. Submit small developmental activities, such as creating several test questions, no later than the prescribed deadline set by Dr. Smith;
4. Serve as a substitute instructor for the Wednesday, March 1 meeting of Dr. Smith's class (5:30 p.m., room 118, Mueller Center in Vero Beach) – Dr. Smith will be attending a conference in Orlando that evening.
5. Unless approved by Dr. Smith in advance, treat all communications with Dr. Smith as confidential.

It is understood that this agreement will remain in effect throughout the Spring 2000 semester only – any extension will need to be negotiated at the end of the semester. Either party may terminate the agreement, without reason, at any point, by e-mailing the other party.

_____
Dr. Chris Smith

_____
Date

_____
Mr. Tony Barkwell

_____
Date